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ABSTRACT

In June 1976, telephone interviews were conducted with members of 297 randomly selected Jacksonville households by the Florida State University Communication Research Center to provide Florida public television broadcasters with information for developing programming plans which deal with current local issues and needs. After giving information regarding local residence and TV viewing habits, respondents were asked if they perceived any personal effects of potential problems presented in a 33-item checklist. The checklist was followed by a series of open-ended questions on local, state, and national problems. Results were very consistent with those of a similar Jacksonville survey in 1975. The checklist indicated that economic issues were perceived as dominant. In second place were concerns over crime, which had risen sharply from the previous year. Similar concerns were ascertained from the open-ended questions. Demographic data and comparisons are included in the report. (CMV)

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October, 1976

ASCERTAINMENT OF COMMUNITY NEEDS IN JACKSONVILLE SECOND ANNUAL SURVEY

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IR006185

INTRODUCTION

The FCC has recently adopted a long expected recommendation requiring that public broadcast applicants ascertain needs, problems and interests in their local communities. Although the requirements for public television license applicants are less stringent than for commercial television applicants, public television applicants, under the new recommendations, will carry out formal ascertainment surveys similar to those required only of the commercial broadcasters in the past.

These general public surveys are designed to ascertain local community needs, problems and interests and are of use in determining that the licensee serve its community's public interest, convenience and necessity. The general public survey, while providing the public television station staff with information about its audience and community's perceptions, assists in planning programming which is responsive to local needs, issues and interests.

In 1975, the Communication Research Center at Florida State University performed ascertainment interviews in a number of communities served by Florida Public television stations. This year, by going into the field during several consecutive months for data about problem perceptions, we are acquiring data which will provide unique comparisons on changing problem perceptions in these same Florida communities.

Hopefully, the information gained in this 1976 series of ascertainment interviews will aid the Florida public broadcasters in developing an up-to-date programming plan which deals specifically with current local issues and needs.

During the month of June 1976, telephone interviews were conducted with members of 297 randomly selected Jacksonville households by members of the Communication Research Center's interviewing staff.

Each respondent was asked how long he had lived in Florida; then a series of potential local problems was read, the interviewer asking if the problem personally affected the respondent. Altogether, 33 items were included on the master problem checklist.

The problem checklist was followed by a series of open-ended questions on local, state and national problems. This is a change in the 1975 format, when we asked the open-ended questions first to insure that these problems were spontaneously elicited. Many individuals at that time could respond with a problem--they were not thinking about problems and were only able to come up with obvious surface irritants. This year we wished to place the respondents in a problem-thinking vein before asking for individual perceptions; hopefully this might elicit a better response on the open-ended segments of our questionnaire.

Demographics

Most of the respondents in the Jacksonville sample have lived in Florida for a long period of time: 74% have lived here for more than 9 years; 9% for 5-9 years; 14% for 1-5 years; and 2% for less than one year.

Our sample this year is slightly under-represented in males--41% of our sample is male, while recent census figures describe the Jacksonville population as 49% male. Our sample is 80% white, 19% black and 1% Spanish-speaking, while 77% of the Jacksonville population, according to census figures, is white, 22% black and 1% Spanish-speaking.

TABLE 1

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE JACKSONVILLE SAMPLE

	Percent of Sample
Sex	
Male	41%
Female	59%
Race	
White	80%
Black	19%
Spanish	1%
Age	
Under 21	2%
21-30	20%
31-40	19%
40-51	19%
51-60	17%
60 and over	22%
Refused	1%
Education	
Did not finish high school	22%
High school graduate	39%
Some college	19%
College degree	19%
Family composition	
No children	48%
Children under 6	18%
Children 6-13	26%
Children over 13	32%

The sample is well varied agewise with 20% of our sample being 21-30 years; 19% 31-40 years; another 19% 41-50 years; 17% 51-60 and 22% over 60.

While 22% of the Jacksonville respondents did not finish high school, 39% have a high school diploma, 19% have had some college experience, and another 19% have a college degree (or more).

Altogether, our sample appears fairly representative of the total Jacksonville population.

PTV Viewing

Ninety-nine percent of the Jacksonville sample has at least one television set: 40% has one set, 44% has two sets, and 15% has three or more television sets.

Eighty-seven percent of the Jacksonville respondents knew that WJCT, Channel 7, exists; 88% of these individuals knew the call letters and/or channel; and 92% of them said they could receive it on their sets. While 87% of those who were able to get Channel 7 said they viewed it and 53% said they viewed once a week or more, only 31% of the "viewers" were able to name a program they had viewed during the past week.

Local Problems: Problem Checklist

The problem checklist is comprised of a number of items read to each respondent following this introduction: The following issues may or may not be problems in your community. Do the following problems affect you? Since the 1976 problem checklist is comprised of the same items used in the 1975 ascertainment public survey, it is possible to compare the data. Table 3 provides rank orderings of problems for 1975

TABLE 2

PTV VIEWERSHIP

	Percent of Sample
Have you a working television set at home?	
No set	1%
One set	40%
Two sets	44%
Three sets	10%
Four or more sets	5%
Is there a PTV station in the area?	
No	8%
Yes	87%
Don't know	5%
Do you remember the station's name or channel?	
No	6%
Yes--gave wrong answer	6%
Yes--gave correct answer	88%
Are you able to get WJCT on your set?	
No	3%
Yes	92%
Don't know	5%
Do you ever view WJCT?	
No	9%
Yes	87%
Don't know	4%
How often do you view it?	
Infrequently	5%
A few times a month	16%
Once a week or more	53%
Daily	25%
Have you watched any programs in the last week?	
No	45%
Yes, but can't name	23%
Yes, can name	31%

TABLE 3

PROBLEM CHECKLIST: RANK ORDERED BY PERCENT

OF RESPONDENTS AFFECTED BY THE PROBLEM

1975-1976

1975	Percent	1975 Rank	1976	Percent	1976 Rank
Inflation	73%	1	Inflation	75%	1
Maintenance of Streets	51%	2	Crime	56%	2
Traffic Congestion	49%	3	Utility Service	55%	3
Taxes	49%	3	Taxes	55%	3
Honesty in Government	46%	4	Honesty in Government	47%	4
Utility Service	46%	4	Traffic Congestion	46%	5
Energy Crisis	45%	5	Obscenity in Media	43%	6
Crime	43%	6	Drug/Alcohol Abuse	43%	6
Air Pollution	35%	7	Bussing	43%	6
Bussing	35%	7	Recreation Facilities	42%	7
Obscenity in Media	35%	7	Air Pollution	38%	8
Recreation Facilities	28%	8	City Growth	37%	9
City Growth	27%	9	Education	36%	10
Education	23%	10	Street Maintenance	34%	11
Public Transportation	23%	10	Unemployment	34%	11
Drug Abuse	22%	11	Public Transportation	31%	12
Police Protection	20%	12	Sex Discrimination	30%	13
Community Decay	20%	12	Energy Crisis	28%	14
Unemployment	17%	13	Consumer Protection	26%	15
Drinking Water	16%	14	City Decay	25%	16
Racial Problems	13%	15	Drinking Water	24%	17
Elderly Care	13%	15	Elderly Care	24%	17
Inadequate Housing	12%	16	Police Protection	21%	18
Food Shortage	12%	16	Cultural Opportunities	19%	19
Cultural Opportunities	12%	16	Fire Protection	18%	20
Lack of News	11%	17	Inadequate Housing	16%	21
Sex Discrimination	11%	17	Medical Services	14%	22
Medical Services	10%	18	Lack of News	14%	22
Fire Protection	8%	19	Racial Problems	12%	23
Lack of Legal Aid	7%	20	Lack of Legal Aid	11%	24
Job Conditions	6%	21	Food Shortage	9%	25
Tourism	4%	22	Tourism	9%	25
			Job Conditions	8%	26

and 1976, according to the percentage of individuals who said the problem affected them each year.

Ranking Problems in Jacksonville: 1975-1976

As illustrated in the Table, the problem most often agreed to was inflation, at about the same percentage of respondents for 1975 and 1976 (73% and 75% of the population). A concern about crime has moved into second place in 1976, replacing street maintenance, which slipped drastically. (While 51% of the respondents agreed maintenance of streets was a problem in 1975, only 34% of the 1976 Jacksonville sample felt it was a problem). Utility service moved up to third place in 1976, with 55% of the sample agreeing that this was a problem affecting them personally. Tied with utility services for third place was taxes, also tied for third in 1975. Again, honesty in local government followed in fourth place.

Changes in Problem Perception Since 1975

When compared generally with 1975, 1976 data suggest that respondents from our most recent survey are perceiving problems to a greater degree. Table 4 presents changes in problem perceptions in 1976.

It appears logical that keeping abreast of the changes in problem perceptions in a community from year to year is just as important as knowing that community's top ten problems; awareness of the discrepancies provides the broadcaster with a view of improving or degenerating conditions.

Items that gained 15 to 20 percentage points in 1976 are unemployment and sex discrimination; items showing gains of 10 to 15 percentage points include crime, drug/alcohol abuse, lack of recreational facilities, city growth, education and fire protection.

Obviously, from Table 4 it is apparent that drug/alcohol abuse, unemployment and sex discrimination have risen dramatically as problems perceived by 1976 Jacksonville respondents, almost doubling their 1975 percentages. Fire protection, while not a major concern, has also doubled in the frequency of mention as a problem. Also showing a sharp rise from 1975 figures are crime, availability of recreational facilities, education, and city growth.

A number of items have slipped since 1975: street maintenance and energy demonstrated a sharp decline in problem popularity, both receiving 17% less frequent problem declaration in 1976. Traffic congestion, racial problems and food shortage also showed a slight decline in 1976 on the problem checklist.

Problems by Demographics

In order to ascertain whether age, sex, race or amount of education influenced problem perceptions on our checklist, we further analyzed the data. Table 4 provides a summary of our analysis, offering those problems which showed different percentages of perception by the demographically different segments of our sample.

Education: As Table 4 indicates, the perception of sex discrimination as a problem appears related to amount of education. Those respondents with a college degree are most concerned, followed by those with some college. The high school graduate is much less likely to perceive a problem here, and the high school drop out is least likely to say that sex discrimination is a problem that personally influences him. Complaints about city decay and renovation are also apparently related to education in the same way as sex discrimination. As one advances up the education ladder, one is more likely to perceive a problem in the city.

TABLE 4

PROBLEM CHECKLIST: DIFFERENCES
IN PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS STATING
THEY WERE AFFECTED BY PROBLEMS
IN 1975 AND 1976

	Change in 1976
Inflation	+ 2%
Crime	+13%
Utility	+ 9%
Taxes	+ 6%
Honesty in Government	+ 1%
Traffic Congestion	- 3%
Obscenity in Media	+ 8%
Drug/Alcohol Abuse	+11%
Bussing	+ 8%
Recreation Facilities	+14%
Air Pollution	+ 3%
City Growth	+10%
Education	+13%
Street Maintenance	-17%
Unemployment	+17%
Public Transportation	+ 8%
Sex Discrimination	+19%
Energy Crisis	-17%
Consumer Protection	*
City Decay	+ 5%
Drinking Water	+ 8%
Elderly Care	+ 9%
Police Protection	+ 1%
Cultural Opportunities	+ 7%
Fire Protection	+10%
Inadequate Housing	+ 4%
Medical Services	+ 4%
Lack of News	+ 3%
Racial Problems	- 1%
Lack of Legal Aid	+ 4%
Food Shortage	- 3%
Tourism	+ 5%
Job Conditions	+ 2%

*Added in 1976

Unexpectedly perhaps, the respondents with a college degree were also more likely to identify lack of fire protection as a problem, and along with the respondents with some college were more likely to perceive race relations as problematic in Jacksonville.

Age: Younger individuals, those from 21-30, appeared somewhat more likely to identify certain items on our checklist as problems that affected them. They were most likely to identify the lack of recreation facilities as a local problem, those respondents over 60 were least likely. The 21-30 year respondents were most likely to perceive food shortages and along with individuals in the 31-40 year group, were most likely to perceive sex discrimination as a problem.

Race: Jacksonville white respondents were more likely than black respondents to state they had a bussing problem; black respondents experienced more inadequate housing, unemployment, food shortage and legal aid problems according to their answers on the problem checklist. Black residents appear more likely to have problems related to lower income levels -- their concerns are with very basic elements of living on the checklist.

Sex: The females in the Jacksonville sample appear much more prone to problem identification on our checklist than males. Females in our sample are more likely to find obscenity in the media, medical services, unemployment, city growth and overpopulation, elderly care, lack of cultural opportunities and utility costs to be problems for them. Males, surprisingly enough, are slightly more likely than women to say that sex discrimination is a community problem which personally affects them.

Open-ended Questions

The open-ended question about community problems is a strategic one,

according to FCC thinking. This question is included in ascertainment procedures to insure that respondents have an opportunity to list problems in their own words -- problems that might be more specific than those listed on the checklist or problems that simply were not included on the checklist.

We have, therefore, as we did last year, included three open-ended questions pertaining to local, state and national problems in our public survey. While the open-ended questions are valuable, because of several inherent drawbacks, they can never fully replace the checklist, the results of which have been already reported on.

To answer the open-ended questions, the respondent must be able to remember and articulate problems; this format has its drawbacks in that an inarticulate individual will have trouble responding, and even the most articulate respondent will offer only those problems that he can think of in that moment. The checklist aids memory and simplifies problem identification; a simple yes or no will suffice.

In 1975, 25% of the Jacksonville sample could offer no local problem, 42% no state problem and 41% no national problem when requested to do so on the open-ended segment of the questionnaire. This year, considering that our respondents demonstrated an itensification of problem perception in the local checklist, we might expect them to respond more vociferously to the open-ended questions. This effect should be dramatized by the placement of the open-ended questions after the local problem checklist, giving the respondent the advantage of being problem-attuned, and hopefully having triggered his memory about problems he has personally experienced in the recent past.

It is of interest here to discover whether the respondents add problems not included on the checklist -- this being one of the primary reasons for including open-ended questions in an ascertainment survey.

Table 5 provides a comparison of the respondents' ability to name problems in 1975 and 1976.

The Jacksonville respondents, as demonstrated by the data in Table 5, were not anymore likely to name a local problem in 1976. Furthermore, appropriate problems that were listed generally fell into the categories already included on the local problem checklist.* On the basis of the meager evidence generated by this study and a similar one in Tallahassee, it may be suggested that the placement of the open-ended questions before or after the problem checklist does not appear to affect the naming of the local problems. It also appears likely, on the basis of 1975 and 1976 data, that the open-ended question on local problems does not necessarily elicit problems unavailable to the checklist.

Interestingly enough, however, the Jacksonville respondents were strikingly more able to list state and national problems this year. Possibly, this is related to the increased problem perception on the checklist this year; if so, the non-increased local problem identification may be due to the fact that the respondents had already answered the local problem checklist and felt that perceptions on local problems had been sufficiently examined, allowing them to concentrate on state and national affairs instead.

A further study of the open-ended questions reveals that certain groups excell in problem verbalization on our questionnaire. White, male and college educated individuals from 21-30 years of age were more

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* A number of relatively esoteric responses escaped classification; these were in all cases replies of a single respondent -- not by any means problems of high intensity in the community.

TABLE 5

LOCAL PROBLEMS (CHECKLIST) BY DEMOGRAPHICS

EDUCATION	Drop-Out	High School	Some College	BA+
Sex Discrimination	13%	25%	43%	48%
Urban Renewal	18%	17%	43%	48%
Police Protection	11%	38%	15%	38%
Lack of News & Info	10%	16%	18%	17%
Lack of Fire Protection	26%	14%	13%	48%
Energy	24%	32%	7%	41%
Race	7%	7%	26%	14%

AGE	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+
Recreation Facilities	57%	43%	41%	44%	33%
Bussing	50%	50%	53%	25%	29%
Sex Discrimination	37%	43%	29%	25%	19%
Food Shortage	17%	4%	13%	6%	0%

RACE	White	Black
Bussing	47%	31%
Inadequate Housing	13%	27%
Unemployment	29%	54%
Food Shortage	5%	27%
Availability of Legal Aid	9%	19%
Racial Problems	12%	12%

SEX	Male	Female
Sex Discrimination	32%	28%
Obscenity	35%	50%
Medical Services	5%	22%
Unemployment	22%	42%
Growth and Overpopulation	31%	41%
Elderly Care	18%	29%
Cultural Opportunities	13%	24%
Utility Services	45%	62%

likely to name problems. (See Table A, Appendix). This possibly reinforces our earlier suggestion that the open-ended questionnaire penalizes the less articulate respondents in our sample; the checklist provides these individuals with the opportunity to express their perceptions, when used as part of the ascertainment survey.

The replies to the open-ended questions were categorized in order to determine the areas in which respondents expressed most concern. Table B, C & D in the Appendix provide this data.

Briefly, a ranking of local problem categories, which are the prime concern in an ascertainment study, are as follows (1975 rankings are also offered for comparison):

1975	1976
1. City Services	1. City Services
2. Crime	2. Economy
3. Economy	3. Crime
4. Environment	4. Environment
5. Discontent with Government	5. Discontent with Government
6. Recreation Facilities	6. Recreational Facilities
7. People and Attitudes	7. People and Attitudes

Obviously, not many changes have occurred since 1975, according to the open-ended local problem question; the only change, in fact, being that of economy and crime, which exchanged rankings, reflecting perhaps the increased economic concerns highlighted on the problem checklist. Rankings for state and national problem categories have also remained very similar to the 1975 rankings.

SUMMARY

In June, 1976, the Communication Research Center at the Florida State University completed the first of several ascertainment-oriented

surveys to be performed in Jacksonville, Florida during the next several months.

The questionnaire gathered a wide assortment of information from the respondents in 297 randomly selected Jacksonville households. Besides the usual demographic questions, the respondents were asked about PTV viewing habits and also were requested to respond to a local problem checklist which was read to them by the interviewers. Finally, they were asked to answer open-ended questions regarding their perceptions of local, state and national problems.

The problem checklist appeared to be relatively successful in dealing with the subtleties of problem ascertainment. It was a relatively simple task to come up with the percentages of individuals who found each of our 33 items to be problems. The open-ended questions were somewhat more difficult; the categorization necessary to deal with individual responses removed much of the advantage of acquiring individually verbalized problems. Furthermore, the ranking of problems on our checklist provided interesting changes in problem priorities from 1975 to 1976 which were much harder to perceive in the open-ended questions.

By comparing the individuals who could not give local problems on the open-ended questions with those who responded to items on the checklist, it appears that black respondents and females, while not offering as many responses on the open-ended questions, had more problems recorded on the checklist.

An examination of results of the checklist demonstrated that economic issues are dominant as problems this year: inflation, utility costs, taxes are of major concern to the Jacksonville respondents. A worry over crime has risen sharply this year in Jacksonville -- it ranks

second on the problem checklist. Street maintenance and traffic congestion, which were major concerns in 1975, slipped sharply this year.

It is interesting to compare the percentage of individuals perceiving problems on the local problem checklist in 1975 with corresponding 1976 figures. Our respondents this year showed a much increased problem perception on the checklist. This tendency also appeared in the open-ended state and national problem questions, but not at the local level. Various explanations for this phenomenon have been offered in the text of this report.

In conclusion, the initial 1976 ascertainment public survey has accumulated data entirely consistenc with that gathered in 1975. While much of the problem perception profile has remained the same, various elements are demonstrating differences entirely consistent with current national and local trends. An on-going ascertainment effort, recording the differences in various aspects of local concern appears possible and useful to Florida Public Broadcasters. From the rankings of local problems provided by the problem checklist, and from the increasing percentages of respondents that consider issues problematic, it becomes possible to analyze changes in public concern, thus providing essential information for program planning which is timely and meets local needs.

TABLE 6

PERCENTAGES OF RESPONDENTS ABLE TO NAME LOCAL, STATE & NATIONAL PROBLEMS 1975 & 1976

	1975	1976
Named local problem	75%	73%
Could not name local problem	25%	27%
Named state problem	58%	71%
Could not name state problem	42%	29%
Named national problem	59%	73%
Could not name national problem	41%	27%

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS: PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS ABLE TO NAME PROBLEMS BY DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60+
Local	88%	73%	79%	67%	67%
State	77%	73%	73%	71%	61%
National	76%	76%	77%	75%	71%

EDUCATION	Drop-out	High School	Some College	BA+
Local	66%	72%	71%	90%
State	59%	69%	77%	75%
National	52%	73%	87%	96%

ETHNIC	White	Black
Local	76%	64%
State	70%	74%
National	80%	56%

SEX	Male	Female
Local	75%	72%
State	72%	68%
National	84%	68%

APPENDIX B

1976

LOCAL PROBLEMS FOR OPEN ENDED QUESTION

CITY SERVICES	**26%**
Schools	7%
Traffic	5%
Roads	4%
Sewage	2%
Recreation Facilities	2%
Public Transportation	2%
Other	4%
ECONOMY	**23%**
Cost of Living	13%
Unemployment	5%
Other	5%
CRIME & SAFETY	**20%**
Too Much Crime	12%
Drugs	6%
Police & Fire Protection	2%
ENVIRONMENT	**14%**
Pollution	6%
Growth	3%
Other	5%
DISCONTENT WITH GOVERNMENT	**9%**
RACE	**8%**
Bussing	7%
Racial Problems	1%
PEOPLE & ATTITUDES	**2%**

APPENDIX C

1976

STATE PROBLEMS

ECONOMY	**38%**
Cost of Living	14%
Unemployment	13%
Taxes	4%
Welfare	2%
Industrial Slump	2%
Other	3%
ENVIRONMENT	**24%**
Overpopulation/City Growth	16%
Ecology	5%
Other	3%
POLITICS	**12%**
Corruption	9%
Too Much Government	2%
Other	10%
CRIME SAFETY	**12%**
Too Much Crime	10%
Law Enforcement	2%
GENERAL SERVICES	**9%**
School	3%
Highways	2%
Senior Citizen Aid	2%
Other	2%
RACE	**3%**
PEOPLE/ATTITUDES	**2%**

APPENDIX D

1976

NATIONAL PROBLEMS

POLITICS	38%
Corruption	29%
President	4%
Other	5%
ECONOMY	32%
Cost of Living	16%
Poor Economics	6%
Unemployment	5%
Welfare	1%
Government Spending	1%
Taxes	1%
Other	2%
CRIME - SAFETY	8%
ENVIRONMENT	7%
Energy	3%
Overpopulation	2%
Other	2%
PEOPLE/ATTITUDES	7%
Poor Attitude	2%
Need for Brotherhood	2%
Other	3%
RACIAL PROBLEMS	5%
FOREIGN AFFAIRS	2%
GENERAL SERVICES	1%